

Afterword & Postscript with corrected date, for *SIX MONTHS' HACKING or, Six Years Hacking Six Months: John M. Bennett Hacks Jim Leftwich's Six Months Aint No Sentence 2011-2016 & Other Mysteries*

Early in 2011, after devoting three years to organizing and documenting events for Collab Fests and Marginal Arts Festivals in Roanoke, VA, I decided it was time to refocus my commitment, away from events and exhibits and back to poetry and related matters, so, on Easter Sunday, April 24, I wrote the first entry in what was to become *Six Months Aint No Sentence*, a series of 187 books averaging roughly 100 pages per book, which I worked on just about every day for five and a half years (approximately two thousand days, adding on average between 9 and 10 pages per day), and finally abandoned in 2016, with the last entry being dated August 29 of that year.

I think I started sending the completed books to John as soon as I had the first one finished and converted to a pdf. The last entry in Book 1 is dated 05.23.2011. I probably sent it to John on that date. Maybe I didn't send him every book, I don't remember those details, but I'm sure I sent him most of them. And I don't remember exactly when he started sending me his hacks of them in response, but it was early in the five-and-a-half-year process. The poems he sent in response to my books became an important part of my experience of writing them. There were certainly times when I was writing with John in mind, knowing that he would read and respond to whatever I was writing.

When on September 1 of this year (2021) John sent me a pdf of his final draft of *SIX MONTHS' HACKING or, Six Years Hacking Six Months: John M. Bennett Hacks Jim Leftwich's Six Months Aint No Sentence 2011-2016 & Other Mysteries*, I responded in part by writing "It is very close to impossible that such a book should exist." He agreed.

It is very close to impossible that my life would have even resembled what it has been over the past 28 years without the very large presence of John M. Bennett in it, sometimes on the periphery, other times at the center, always involved in opening our world onto enormous, generative, mutagenic poetic vistas. This book is a record, and a part of a much larger record, of our long and very rich collaborative relationship.

In my mind, the phrase "six months aint no sentence" was intended to refer to a particular type of long-term commitment, one perhaps not valued very much by the cultural context in which it is practiced.

On the 7" single of "Junco Partner" recorded by James Wayne in 1951, the full title of the song is given as "Junco Partner (worthless man)". My most explicit expression of something similar to that general sensibility can be found in the short meditation entitled "Useless Writing," written in March of 2001.

In the James Wayne version of the song, the relevant lines are:

Six months ain't no sentence
And one year ain't no time
I was born in Angola
I was serving 99

A song entitled "6 Months Ain't A Sentence," recorded in 1924 in Greenville, South Carolina, is included on the compilation of field recordings released in 1984 as *Nobody Knows My Name: Blues From South Carolina And Georgia*. The title was given to the song by Lawrence Gellert, who made the original recording.

I first heard the line in a song entitled "Junco Partner" on Dr. John's *Gumbo* album, released in 1972. His version of the chorus is:

Six months ain't no sentence
One year ain't no time
They got boys there in Angola
Doing nine to ninety-nine

In 1980, The Clash included two versions of "Junco Partner" on their album entitled *Sandinista*.

09.09.2021
[11.02.2021]

from Bob Brueckl [11.02.2021]

I also got SIX MONTHS' HACKING,
and that too, I'm not sure what to make of it,
but I do feel (think -- know) that it is important,
and possibly even "great" in its uniqueness.

On Page 187 of that book you say that you wrote
the first entry of your SMANS on Easter Sunday, April 4 --
Is that a TYPO? -- because I asked Mother Google
on what date Easter fell in the year 2011, and she said --
*** *** (DRUMROLL) *** Easter Sunday in 2011
fell on April 24th. It was late that year, and the latest
it can ever fall is April 25th -- according to Mother G.

my reply:

You are right, the date for the first entry in the Six Months series is April 24. Thanks for pointing it out. I really hate that kind of typo. It makes me look like I don't know, or don't care, about precise chronological accuracy, when I actually do care about that very much.

[Six Months Aint No Sentence Book 1](#)